

TO: EDUCATION APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE

FROM: MONTANA MUNICIPAL CLERKS, TREASURERS AND
FINANCE OFFICERS ASSOCIATION

SUBJECT: FUNDING REQUEST FOR THE **MSU LOCAL GOVERNMENT
CENTER** AS PART OF THE MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION BUDGET

Enclosed are **public comments** submitted by municipal clerks, treasurers and finance offices. These comments represent the following communities:

Superior
Malta
Conrad
Columbus
Levina
Hardin
Libby
Whitefish
Chinook
Eureka
Glasgow
Choteau
Big Timber
Wibaux
Cascade

As outlined in these comments, the **MSU Local Government Center** is a critical resource for training, technical assistance and research used by local governments

Dear Education Appropriations Subcommittee:

MSU Local Government Center has been an invaluable resource for education, training, outreach and research for many Public Officials and Public Employees for many years.

The education, training, outreach and research provided by the Local Government Center has benefited every City, Town and County in the State of Montana. Public Officials and Public Employees that have attended training approach their positions with confidence, professionalism and better equipped to handle the myriad of tasks that Local Governments face. Cities, Towns and Counties have a resource through the Local Government Center to access research on a variety of subjects that without the Local Government Center the information would not be available.

I, personally, have attended the Montana Municipal Clerks, Treasurers and Finance Officers Association annual Institute since 1985. First as an attendee and for the last ten years I have been on the Education Committee with eight years as the Education Committee Chair. I have and continue to work closely with the dedicated staff of the Local Government Center. They are tremendously committed to providing current, timely, and most importantly affordable education for our Elected Officials and Public Employees.

I urge you to continue supporting the Local Government Center at no less than the present level, and perhaps even consider increasing their resources. Without their efforts, local government officials, both elected and non-elected alike, will have nowhere to go for education and information. Since the majority of local governments are small, with limited resources, the chaos that would ensue could be even more devastating on the health and welfare of the public they serve.

Brenda L. Schneider, MMC/CPFA
Town Clerk/Treasurer
Town of Superior, MT

Dear Education Appropriations Subcommittee:

As Clerk/Treasurer for the City of Malta and also the President of the Montana Municipal Clerks, Treasurers and Finance Officers Association, I will attest to the importance of the Local Government Center. I have had positive contact with this group of individuals whether it concerned a local issue or the week long school held each year with their assistance. This group is of great value to small and large communities alike. Dan Clark is very knowledgeable and is a great asset to us as well as the others at the LGC.

Sincerely,

Carolyn Schmoeckel, cmc
Clerk/Treasurer
President MMCT&FOA

To Whom It May Concern:

The MSU Local Government Center located in Bozeman is an asset that for all governmental agencies is a must have. The training and education that is offered through them, at no direct cost to the entity, benefits in far reaching means to all levels affiliated with it.

Most communities, due to all the other unfunded mandates we must deal with, could not afford the services offered if they had to pay for them. We benefit many times over with the services they offer and thus make us better clerks and treasurers who are the guardians of the money for the Cities and Towns. All levels of government benefit from MSU Local Government Centers services which in these economic times cannot be overlooked. You are getting the most bang for your buck when you spend it on the MSU Local Government Center.

I urge your continued support of the MSU Local Government Center at no less than the present level. Increased funding would be greatly appreciated and would be money well spent by the taxpayers of the State of Montana.

Agnes Fowler, CMC
Finance Officer

City of Conrad
406-271-3623
406-271-5602-fax
cityconrad@yahoo.com

Dear Education Appropriations Subcommittee:

There are 129 members of the Montana League of Cities and Towns. That's all of Montana. By the time Stacey makes her presentation, you will have heard support for Dan Clark & Co. from most of them.

Speaking for myself, I have been a Clerk-Treasurer for twenty five years and only missed a couple of events coordinated by the Local Government Center. There is NO other place for Clerks or Elected Officials to get the training offered by them. This would be a giant step backwards if their funding is not kept or increased.

Keep in mind that Wyoming has no Association like ours, so many of their Clerks come to Montana. New Clerks will have nowhere to go to learn what is needed to do today's jobs.

Ronald D. Barndt, CMC
Town Clerk-Treasurer
Town of Columbus

Honorable Members of the Legislative Assembly;

The Local Government Center in Bozeman is the grease for the 'Wheels of Governing' in every single Town or City Council in Montana. I am from a very small town, but the rules are the same no matter where you are and each Clerk has to do their job to keep things running smoothly - rules, regulations and procedures. We report on these issues, follow laws, pay bills to keep things moving smoothly, and most importantly, perform as guardians of the Taxpayer's money. The Local Government Center is the go-to place for any question about procedure to help employees of Local Government do their job CORRECTLY!. LGC's representation at State Association Meetings and Training Seminars is a given and they always present very timely information for helping Clerks and Local Elected Officers do their job in a professional manner. I

have also participated in their Webinars and this technology is invaluable in a state this size.

I hope the show of support from Towns and Cities all over the State of Montana will speak volumes and you can understand the importance of your vote to continue funding or increase it to provide the latest news and law information to all of us. This is your opportunity to support your constituents in the truest way!!! Thank you for taking the time to consider my words.

Sincerely yours,

Ellen Lehfeldt
Town Clerk of Lavina

Dear Education Appropriations Subcommittee:

The LOCAL GOVERNMENT CENTER has been a tremendous resource and support during my short time here (3years). When you start working for a city, there is so much to know, and things continually change. This is where Dan Clark and staff help fill in the gaps. Not only do they help with training (both coordinating institutes and doing training sessions), they are a resource that can be turned to whenever a situation comes up.

Please continue to support us by supporting the work of the Local Government Center.

Thank you,

Michelle Dyckman

Finance Officer
City of Hardin
406 North Cheyenne
Hardin MT 59034
(406) 665-9293
cityfinance@hardinmt.com

Dear Education Appropriations Subcommittee:

The Local Government Center has been a great benefit to the City of Libby. I don't think I could have learned nor done my job as City Clerk-Treasurer correctly without them. Libby would certainly like to see them continue.

Glena L. Hook
City Clerk-Treasurer
City of Libby

Dear Education Appropriations Subcommittee:

The Local Government Center in Bozeman is a current, constant and accesible resource for Municipal Clerks, Treasurer's and Finance Officers. Their responses to questions provide quick references to State Law, and best policies and procedures to follow in the day to day operation of local government. They also provide educational training through the Annual Clerk's Treasure's and Finance Officer's Institute, plus local educational training sessions that are also invaluable for local government personnel and elected officials. Thank you for continuing to fund the LGS.

Necile Lorang, CMC
Whitefish City Clerk

Dear Education Appropriations Subcommittee:

I have been with the City for 28 years and have worked with the Local Government Center for the same amount of time. This group is invaluable to the Cities and Towns of Montana in that when we, the Clerks, have a question, we know that we can contact them and get an answer in a timely manner. The Local Government Center is our support group. We need them!!!!

Lorraine Mulonet
City Clerk/Treausurer
City of Chinook

Dear Education Appropriations Subcommittee:

Dan Clark and the staff at Montana State University Local Government Center are an excellent source of information and for training for clerks and treasurers for Montana towns. They are a big reason for the success of the Clerk's Institute in Billings. And throughout the year, they are helpful and informative to the clerks. Every year there are more requirements of the town clerks and treasurers, and it is extremely helpful to have the Local Government Service just a phone call or e-mail away to answer those difficult questions.

Thank you.

Mary Duram, Town of Eureka

Dear Education Appropriations Subcommittee:

The Local Government Center is a great resource for all cities and towns in the state of Montana. The Montana Association of Clerks, Treasurers and Finance Officers would be lost without them.

Stacey Amundson
City Clerk
City of Glasgow

Dear Education Appropriations Subcommittee:

The MSU Local Government Center in Bozeman is an integral partner with not only large cities but smaller rural communities. Their knowledge and technical assistance is vital in helping to train not only our municipal clerks, treasurers, and finance officers but mayors, council people, city attorneys, and the list goes on. It is imperative to this great state of Montana that this valuable resource continue to be funded.

Sincerely,
Jodi Rogers, Finance Officer, City of Choteau

Mary Corey, Deputy Clerk, City of Choteau
Linda O'Loughlin, Deputy Clerk, City of Choteau

Dear Education Appropriations Subcommittee:

It seems the business of local government gets more sophisticated every day. Clerk's are expected to have the knowledge of a CPA and a law degree as well (all without the pay scale). LGC is on of the resources we have to keep up with all the new State and Federal laws, not to mention all the new accounting requirements. If we do not have the LGC I don't know who we will turn to.

Gayle McPherson, Clerk/Treasurer, Big Timber, MT

Dear Education Appropriations Subcommittee:

For nearly 30 years, the Town of Wibaux has been sending its clerk to the Montana Municipal Clerk's, Finance Officers and Treasurer's Institute. Over the years, that has been at least 4 different clerks. We have found it a most valuable training opportunity. We are located along the eastern Montana border, a long way from many other training opportunities. The clerk can sometimes feel pretty isolated. The MSU Local Government Center plays a key role in pulling the clerk's institute together. But that's not all the center does. The staff doesn't just get to just slide the rest of the year. We have utilized them in the past to help us put together personnel policies and to train mayors and council persons on their legal responsibilities and roles. Most recently, the Local Government Center helped put together a clerk's association list serve, and the center's staff frequently adds its expertise to questions posed throughout the year on the list serve by both new and experienced municipal employees. Small towns such as ours have limited resources. By assisting us with our training needs, the Local Government Center helps us stretch those resources further.

Ginny Archdale
Wibaux

Dear Education Appropriations Subcommittee:

As Clerk/Treasurer for the Town of Cascade for a little over one year, I have found the Local Government Center invaluable! The knowledge and training that Dan Clark and the rest of the group brings is amazing, especially to a new clerk! I don't know how I would've dealt with quite a few issues without them. Thank you for this fantastic resource!

Sincerely,

Jodie Campbell
Clerk/Treasurer Town of Cascade